# LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

## Twenty Years On

R.P.D.

## The Forrestal Diaries

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

## Africa in Ferment

DESMOND BUCKLE

January, 1953

One shilling and sixpence

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# PEOPLE TO PEOPLE

IMAGINE a round-the-world hook-up abandoning for once propaganda by the Big-Heads and instead broadcasting this New Year message: 'To the people belongs the future; sooner or later the truth will be known by them and the warmongers will be stopped cold'. No, it was not on the air this season; but it is certainly *in* the air, this message reaching us from an American friend, which we now re-broadcast to readers in all five continents. For this is the true voice of the peoples everywhere, and not least the voice of all that is best in Britain, 'the people who have not spoken yet'. How urgently and how firmly our voice needs to make itself heard, to silence those 'spokesmen' who speak with the gun, the bomb, the whip, with crop destruction, land-robbery, cattle-stealing and famine. Take warning from this letter to a South African reader: 'The Malanazis here are gloating over England's actions in Kenya. Every white supremacist is delighted at this proof that the English are no better—or no worse—than "we" are'.

Outside the window as I write a long file of lads march by, their regiment home from Korea. How bitter to know that a longer line still is marching away, to Africa, the Middle East, Korea, Malaya, earning the hatred of those peoples who struggle to win independence and to prevent their lands being turned into war bases. At what cost must these lads and their families learn that independence begins at home—that while their backs are turned, their own country is fast becoming yet another Yankee war-base, with all that will mean in suppression and suffering for the inhabitants? But, of course, some of the lads know it already; others learn fast. Witness the young National Serviceman, now on his way abroad to one of the 'trouble spots'. He says: 'H.M. Forces have decided that my presence is necessary in X....., though they have not told me the reason why—I have to read *Labour Monthly* to find that out! For the privilege of residing there I get a special allowance. It seems to me that this bit extra can serve a purpose other than they intended and help all us lads to understand why we are separated from our families and our girls—and, what is more important, what to do about it. So here it is, for your fund'. This New Year message to take with him: 'To the peoples belongs the future. . . .' At home a North countryman describes his difficulties as he wages 'my own private cold war against debt and destitution'. Nevertheless he renews his subscription because '*L.M* remains essential reading for informed Left opinion; even—or perhaps more so, you would say—for such firmly non-Communist leftwingers as myself'. The same greeting to him, too. And to the reader in Hong Kong, who describes it as being 'like pre-liberation Shanghai. Beggars are everywhere. Abysmally low wages, women getting 1s. 3d. a day for breaking stones. Not much laughter here. The rich consider the possibilities of exploitation in Borneo, which seems to be in for a deluge of voracious human locusts. And everywhere the all-powerful American community, of which every member speaks like a Voice of America'. Compare that picture with *Impressions of China.*

Our greeting goes to a reader in Iceland, another in Erivan, to yet another in a lumber camp in Canada, to engineers in New Zealand and in South Africa, trade union organisers in the United States and India: it seems,

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**Notes of the Month**

# *Twenty Years On*

**If Hitler were alive today, he would regard the current tendency of Western nations to seek salvation of the world through the destruction of Russia as a supreme triumph of his philosophy.**

**(S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, September, 1952.)**

ON January 30, 1933, Hitler assumed office in Germany. On January 20, 1953, General Eisenhower will assume office in the United States. What is the philosophy of life of General Eisenhower? He expressed it in March, 1951, when he explained his attitude to the use of the atom bomb:

> 'If I thought the net gain was on my side, I would use it instantly'. He said he was concerned at the apparently growing opinion that the United States should never drop the atom bomb first. 'To my mind the use of the atom bomb would be on this basis: Does it advantage us?'
>
> (Eisenhower, evidence to the Senate Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committees, *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, March 13, 1951.)



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President Eisenhower has appointed as his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who by an odd coincidence visited Korea in June, 1950, a week before the fighting began, and on June 21, 1950, four days before the opening of hostilities publicly promised 'positive action' in Korea. What is the philosophy of life of Mr. Secretary Dulles?

> The United States and its allies should not accept a purely defensive role.
>
> (J. F. Dulles, speech at the University of Arizona, May 30, 1951.)

Elaborating his inspired thought, Mr. Dulles explained that the Western Powers should 'muster a combined striking force of great power' able to

> hit Russia's interior lines of communication with such disruptive power that its highly centralised Asiatic State will fall apart.
>
> (J. F. Dulles, speech at Detroit, November 27, 1951.)

Such are the sweetly humane, civilised disciples who, twenty years after Hitler, now assume office in the United States to carry on the good work as leaders of what they are pleased to call 'Western civilisation'.

**Twenty Years Too Late**

These twenty years have, however, taught the world some lessons. It is only in certain quarters of Washington, Whitehall and Bonn that these lessons have not yet been learned. The Eisenhowers and Dulles may believe that in 1953 they can successfully brandish the moth-eaten Hitler-Goebbels banners of the 'Bolshevik peril' and the 'Russian menace' and 'Western European Unity against Communism' to cover similarly their aims of militarism, aggression and expansion. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden may seek to reproduce slavishly the Appeasement of Mr. Neville Chamberlain and Sir Horace Wilson in relation to the new war-lords and aspirants to world domination. These pious ancestor-worshippers may seek to revive assiduously the embers of Nazism in Western Germany or of the militarist war-criminal cliques in Japan. Mr. Lyttelton may preach anew the gospel of 'ruthlessness'; while the glorification of violence, brutality and murder is inculcated once again through all the media of mass indoctrination (films and million-sale pamphlets), with results visible in the police courts. Even the Delirium Tremens which sees the Red Flood in every sunrise or in Aunt Matilda's red flannel chest-protector is faithfully reproduced and carried to new heights of craziness:



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> Since Marx enunciated his doctrine slightly more than 100 years ago, we Americans have adopted—in varying degrees—practically his entire programme.
>
> (Admiral Moreel, President of the Jones and Coughlin Steel Corporation, Pittsburg, Chairman's Address to the 32nd annual meeting of the American Petroleum Institute, Chicago, November 9, 1952.)

These revivalists of an antique melodrama long hissed off the stage have forgotten the end of the saga in the bunker below the Chancellery of Berlin. It is true that they are now reported to be engaged in building a similar bunker, below eighty feet of solid rock, in the neighbourhood of the Pentagon in Washington, no doubt in anticipation of a similar *dénouement*. The tenets of their brand of 'Western civilisation' always require strict adherence to precedent.

**1953 Is Not 1933**

The world has changed. 1953 is not 1933. The majority of mankind is today ranged against Western imperialism. The Atlantic bloc of Western imperialist powers is visibly based on a minority. The mechanical rota of '41 to 5, with 12 abstentions', now customarily repeated in the United Nations Assembly (this particular vote was the rejection on December 2, 1952, of the Soviet proposal for an immediate cease-fire in Korea, which is resisted by the United States and the Western Powers, who vote for the war to go on), is a misleading picture of the real relations of forces. The Fourteen Atlantic Pact powers represent a total population (excluding colonial dependencies) of 360 millions, or, including Western Germany, Franco-Spain, Tito-Jugoslavia and Japan, 535 millions. If Australia, New Zealand and the White population of South Africa are added, together with Sweden, Switzerland and Ireland, and Western Austria, this would still leave under 570 millions in the states of the imperialist camp. The U.S.S.R. and People's China and the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe represent a total population of 800 millions. The remaining 1,000 millions of the earth's population (including 410 millions in India, Pakistan and Ceylon, 120 millions in Latin America, and some 4-500 millions in South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa) represent the colonial and semi colonial peoples of the world, engaged in increasingly active struggle against imperialism and already rocking its foundations. 570 millions ranged (the majority unwillingly) in the camp of imperialism. 800 millions already free and in the camp of socialism. 1,000 millions in subjection seeking their way to freedom, and visibly moving towards the camp of peace and socialism. Such is the picture of the world



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today. Decidedly, the balance has moved—and continues to move fast. Africa has joined the Middle East and Southern Asia in ferment. New currents spread in Western Europe. None can doubt the outcome on any longer view—the historical verdict has already been given. Today our concern is to see that the new Mad Dogs are restrained before the world has to pay again the heavy price which the last adventure of aggression cost, and which would be a heavier price this time. This objective is fully realisable in the present relation of forces. But it will require the most active fight for changes of policy in Britain and Western Europe. The need for these changes is driven home by the present worsening economic situation. These great questions are coming to a head in 1953.

**Balance-Sheet of 1952**

Outstanding in 1952 has been the soaring economic advance of the socialist world, alongside the absolute decline, deterioration in productive and trade levels, and in consumption standards, together with bristling rearmament of the capitalist world. The Nineteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the most important political landmark of 1952, revealed that, despite the colossal war destruction, Soviet production by 1951 was thirteen times the level of 1929, and more than double pre-war, while United States production, which had suffered no war destruction and only profited from the war, was by 1951 only twice the level of 1929, and below the level of the wartime peak of 1943. The new Five Year Plan envisaged an increase of production by 70 per cent. by 1955, with which may be contrasted the revised 'plan' announced of the unhappy Marshall Western European powers to increase output by 6.8 per cent. by the beginning of 1955. Parallel sweeping advances have been shown by the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe and by People's China. No less striking has been the contrast of the advance in consumption, living standards and social expenditure, alongside the cuts, lowered standards and rising prices in Western Europe.

**None so Blind**

Long vanished are the days of the old 'hard-headed' 'practical' bourgeois contemptuously dismissing the 'fanciful notions' and 'unpractical idealism' of socialist propaganda. Today the boot is on the other foot. The pundits of Western capitalism now proclaim: 'Our output may be low, and our practical results poor, and our



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exchequer bankrupt; but we have a wonderful stock of fanciful notions, unworkable economic theories and fictitious spiritual values to offer you'. The gulf between the understanding of the dying world and the living has grown great. Despite all the assiduous muddle-headed study of Marxist-Leninist texts now made obligatory for the aspiring diplomats, police experts and service chiefs of the Anglo-American camp, it is doubtful whether the most intelligent of them has guessed that the most important historical fact of 1952, which is likely to be remembered long after all the detail events are forgotten, is that the Nineteenth Congress and Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* charted the path for the greatest adventure in human history—the transition to communism.

**Bellicose Balance-Sheet**

But the old world has also been busy in its own fashion in 1952. Economic progress may have stagnated or declined. But war preparations and plans and actions have been strenuously pressed forward. The Bonn and Paris Agreements for Western German rearmament and for the American-controlled 'European Army' were signed in May—even though the ratification of the Bonn Agreement was only carried through in Britain, on the basis of a parliamentary vote representing a minority of the electorate, and was still held up by the mounting opposition in France and Western Germany. The illegal San Francisco Treaty for Japan and United States-Japan Treaty to establish a reactionary satellite rearmed Japan, and the Pacific Pact of the United States, Australia and New Zealand came into force around the same time. The Lisbon meeting of the Atlantic powers at the beginning of the year set ambitious goals of rearmament and for the massing of armed divisions in Western Europe—which at the Paris meeting at the end of the year had to be recognised as having proved incapable of achievement. In the United States the war camp secured the election of General Eisenhower as President. Britain economically cut food subsidies by £150 million, raising the cost of living of the necessaries of life for the poorest, in order to spend £100 million on blowing up an atom bomb at Monte Bello.

**Moves for Peace and for War**

Soviet proposals for a Four Power Conference on Germany were systematically and verbosely blocked by the Western powers. Soviet proposals for a cease-fire in Korea, initiated since the summer of



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1951 were similarly blocked and voted down by the Western powers throughout 1952, in the name of the sacred claims of 'humanity' for the prisoners of war whom they were massacring on Koje Island. In Egypt a military dictatorship was imposed amid American applause; while in Iran the break of Mossadeq with Britain was followed by American attempts to secure the oil for American companies. In Kenya an offensive of full-scale terror was let loose against the people, parallel to the Malan offensive in South Africa and the French offensive in the North. Nevertheless, the advance of the war drive was met with mounting opposition from the people in all countries, as shown in the hold-up of the Bonn Agreement, the so called 'anti-American' currents in Western Europe, the defeat of two years conscription in Belgium, the strength of the Defiance campaign in South Africa, and culminating at the end of the year in the Congress of the Peoples for Peace at Vienna.

**Balance-Sheet for Britain**

In Britain the Tory Government's onslaught on the standards of the people was conducted through the Butler cuts imposed in January and the Budget with the slashing of food subsidies in April. The gold and dollar reserves were protected by ruthless measures which led to lower production and falling trade. Unemployment rose and real wages fell. The Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party sounded the call for the united resistance of the working class and for a united fight of all sections for a positive alternative policy, at the same time as the long-term programme of the British Road to Socialism was finally adopted. This campaign bore fruit. The militant activity of the working class, both in the economic and the political field, extended to new levels during the year. Votes against the rearmament programme were recorded by four and a half millions at the Co-operative Congress, one and a half millions at the Trades Union Congress, and two and a quarter millions at the Labour Party Conference. The Labour Party was driven by rank and file pressure to record the first break in bi-partisan foreign policy since the war by the vote against ratification of the Bonn Treaty in August.

**Masses in Movement**

The wage movement of eight million workers during the second half of the year reached its highest point with decision of the Engineering and Shipbuilding Confederation to impose a ban on overtime in support of the demands of two and a half million



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workers; although the subsequent retreat from action led to only minute increases being won, less than the increase in the cost of living. At the Margate Trades Union Congress the General Council was defeated on two significant resolutions, one for the extension of nationalisation to be incorporated in the next Labour Government's programme, and the other on germ warfare; while over two and a half million votes were recorded against the General Council's wage policy and the demand for East-West trade received unanimous support. Even more striking was the shift of opinion revealed at the Morecambe Labour Party Conference, where the elections to the Executive by the constituency labour parties removed Morrison and Dalton and installed their critics, and composite rank and file resolutions were carried for extended nationalisation, East-West trade and partial progressive changes in foreign policy. The right wing leadership met this advance of the left with drastic measures to endeavour to reverse the trend, impose new restrictions in the parliamentary party, and conduct a disruptive offensive in the trade union movement, especially against the trades councils. Nevertheless, the visible deepening crisis of policy within the labour movement, and sharpening battle against the discredited right wing leadership, occupied the centre of the political situation, overshadowing the monotonous stage-play of the sham fight over formalities in parliament. The Executive of the Labour Party retired to the seclusion of the most exclusive aristocratic hotel in Mayfair to elaborate its policy in these conditions of rumbling premonitions of mass ferment below.

**Shadow of Economic Crisis**

Over the whole situation in Britain, and in varying degree throughout the capitalist world, hangs the shadow of gathering signs of economic crisis at the opening of 1953. When Hitler came to power in January, 1933, the capitalist five-sixths of the world was creeping painfully out of the depths of the economic crisis of the preceding years. The shot in the arm of rearmament expenditure helped to provide the basis for Hitler's boast of full employment. When Eisenhower assumes power in January, 1953, the capitalist two-thirds of the world is showing signs of economic descent. The shot in the arm of rearmament and war expenditure has already been utilised on an extreme scale during the preceding years, and has led to its consequences in increasing dislocation and lowered consumption. Even in the United States the level of industrial output fell by



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13½ per cent. between February and July, 1952 (from 222, on the basis of 1935-39 as 100, to 92); while the United Nations statistics recorded a general fall in world production of the capitalist world by 3 per cent. during the first half of 1952, by 4 per cent. in Western Europe, and by 8 per cent. in Britain. This decline, especially marked in Britain, was carried further during the second half of 1952. The President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Thorneycroft, announced in the House of Commons on November 5 that the post-war 'boom was now spent', and that increasing difficulties must be expected in export markets. *The Economist* on November 22, in a series of articles on 'Living with the Dollar', gloomily concluded that 'the dollar problem is not merely not likely to get better; unless special steps are taken by both the Americans and their customers, the problem is actually likely to get worse'. The proposals of the Empire Premiers' Economic Conference revealed only their helpless dependence on the United States, desperate onslaught on the standards of their peoples, and inability to solve the economic problems with which they were confronted.

**Principal Trade? War**

The First National Bank of Boston in November, 1952, recorded the end of 'the longest boom in history' and the inherent instability of militarised economy:

> It is true that we have had the longest boom in history. But this prosperity has been due to staggering Federal outlays for war and preparations for war. In less than seven years the Federal Government spent $142 billion more than was spent from 1789 to 1940.
>
> Such a huge outlay of funds has had a tremendous impact upon our economy, causing distortions and unbalanced relationships. Per family income in terms of dollars is the highest on record. Yet when corrections are made for the sharp increase in the cost of living and debt, it is found that the net worth of the average family is 12½ per cent. below that of 1939.
>
> (First National Bank of Boston, New England Letter, quoted *Christian Science Monitor*, November 3, 1952.)

So after all the loudly publicised American 'prosperity' the real standard of the average American family is stated by this banking expert calculation to be one-eighth below the level of 1939. But in fact this increasing concentration of modern monopoly capitalism in the United States on militarised economy and war as its principal line to maintain full activity, with colossal profits to the biggest corporations, and lowered standards of the people, goes back further than the past seven years. An examination of the level of United



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States industrial output since the onset of the world economic crisis in 1929 shows that between 1929 and 1939 industrial output showed no increase, the index of 100 in 1929 registering 99 in 1939, then leapt up with the paradise of the second world war to the record height of 217 by 1943, fell back with the end of hostilities to 155 in 1946 and 160 in 1949, and then shot up anew with the godsend of the Korean War and super-rearmament to 182 in 1950 and 200 in 1951. Hence, with the present signs of new decline in 1952, the danger is acute of renewed recourse to further military adventures in 1953 as the 'solution'. The vicious circle drives madly to ever more violent outcomes, as with Hitler. This is the sharp danger which now arises with the advent to power of Eisenhower and Dulles, the chosen creatures of the biggest, most reactionary, aggressive and bellicose American monopolies.

**Crisis of Strategy**

Nevertheless, even the most war-mad militarists of Washington find themselves today confronted with head-splitting dilemmas which do not leave them the easy freedom of action they would desire. These dilemmas and contradictions of the Atlantic Alliance, which have today come into the forefront of attention, are alike strategic, economic and political. We have already noted the economic deterioration which has led to a revolt against the burdens of the American-imposed super-rearmament programme in Europe. The strategic dilemmas are most sharply illustrated in the Korean War and the Far Eastern situation, where the American aggressors are experiencing all the torments of Macbeth:

*I am in blood*
*Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,*
*Returning were as tedious as go o'er.*

Senator Bridges may declare in the November *American Mercury* that 'we cannot end it short of world war'; and Syngman Rhee took the opportunity of Eisenhower's visit to proclaim publicly his favourite panacea that 'only by bombing Moscow can we end the East-West struggle'; to which the grateful Eisenhower replied by acclaiming publicly Syngman Rhee as a 'great leader'.

**Why Not Try Peace?**

In the cold light of facts, however, and not least of Soviet air superiority and atomic preparedness, this 'solution' has been discovered to be easier to scream about in headlines than to carry out in



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practice. The confidential Experts' Commission of scientists and strategists appointed by President Truman to examine the possibilities delivered a gloomy report to the President:

> The scientists and experts concluded that the Kremlin would almost certainly be able to deliver a 'crippling' atomic blow against the United States within two or three years. They further reported that improvement in Soviet air defences would make it impossible for us to repay the Kremlin's blow by crippling the Soviet Union in our turn.
>
> (Alsop Brothers, *New York Herald-Tribune*, November 5, 1952).

The Experts' Report, which is stated to have given rise to 'a first class row' in the high quarters of the American Command, has thus dashed a glass of cold water in the face of the American warmaniacs. A little more of the same medicine, and they may even begin to be screaming to accept the Soviet proposals for banning atomic weapons. The danger of the madmen's gamble is still acute. We have still to see the outcome of Eisenhower's visit to Korea, which may prove the preparation for the most menacing extension of the war in the Far East. But on any rational view, the only practical solution is peace.

**'Anti-Americanism'**

Considerable as are the strategic and economic problems of the American Alliance, the thorniest problems are political. The peoples of the world, not only of the dependent states of Asia, the Middle East and Africa, who sometimes from the nature of their colonial subjection are a little quicker in the uptake to sense political realities, but now even of backward Western Europe, despite all the social democratic anaesthesia, are beginning to see through the American Hitlerite strategy, to resent American domination, and to grow sceptical of all the brandishing of the 'Russian menace' and 'Bolshevik bogy' as the pretext for American military and economic expansion.

> The people of Europe and their Governments believe the Soviet Government when it says that they are not going to be attacked by the Red Army. For it is this belief which is at the root of the resistance to carrying out the N.A.T.O. programme, and it is the main source of the resentment against us when we put pressure upon them to carry out the programme. The crisis of the Western Alliance turns on the question whether the N.A.T.O. programme is or is not absolutely necessary to the survival of Western Europe. It is the belief that the programme as now constituted is not absolutely necessary which makes it increasingly intolerable to the Europeans.
>
> (Walter Lippmann, *New York Herald-Tribune*, November 19, 1952).



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**Gangster 'Protection'**

In short, these chicken-hearted weaklings 'don' wanna be protected'. The more the gangster expatiates on the 'menace' confronting them, and insists on pressing on them his 'protection', the more these ungrateful objects of such chivalrous devotion appear to regard the gangster as the menace. Hence the crisis in the relations of the United States and Western Europe, and the vociferous American complaints of 'anti-Americanism' in Europe:

> In Western Europe a threatened breakdown of American policy is quite clearly looming ahead. . . . The whole Western Alliance may well succumb to the strains which are becoming increasingly unbearable. The flimsy structure of European unity, the central object of American policy in Europe, shows signs of possible collapse.
>
> (Alsop Brothers, *New York Herald-Tribune*, November 5, 1952).

And again

> The Atlantic Alliance that General Eisenhower helped to create is coming apart at the seams.
>
> (*U.S. News and World Report*, November 21, 1952).

The sooner, the better—in the interests of peace.

**'British Isolationism'**

Especially bitter and resentful is American expression over the signs of British national feeling demonstrably moving to hostility to American domination. Under the charming title 'Hysterics in Britain' the organ of Wall Street noted British reactions to the election of Eisenhower:

> Sections of the British press are terribly alarmed by the outcome of our elections. Some of the editors speak of General Eisenhower in terms that must turn Moscow's *Pravda* green with envy.
>
> (*Wall Street Journal*, November 14, 1952).

The closing of Manchester to American troops aroused angry comment. The *New York Times* carried a series of articles on the 'problem' of 'Anti-Americanism':

> The anti-American sentiment shocks the American observer in Europe. . . . It is foolish to ignore that anti-American feeling exists, that it has grown and spread in the last year, and that it is a danger to the Western world. . . . These rifts . . . can grow to fatal dimensions.
>
> (*New York Times*, November 15, 1952).

The *New York Herald-Tribune* carried an article under the heading 'British Isolationism Chief Peril to Allied Unity':

> The realistic truth is that the Allies are divided . . .
> The wavering policies of Great Britain . . .



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The British have a habit of condemning American isolationism, little realising that British isolationism may be at the bottom of most of the difficulties in the world today.

(*New York Herald-Tribune*, November 20, 1952).

**'A Noble and Puissant Nation Rousing Herself'**

Senator Connally, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, returning from a visit to Europe reported that 'several foreign Governments' were 'aghast at the huge size of certain of our diplomatic and aid establishments' involving 'nearly 400,000 civilians employed overseas by the United States' (who said 'infiltration'?). He concluded that the picture in Western Europe was 'not completely satisfying' since *'there is still too much concentration on national interests'* (*The Times*, December 8). The super-national imperialist egoist looks down with lofty contempt on the narrow 'national' aspirations of his subjects. The conditions are assuredly maturing when 'capitalist Britain, and, after her, capitalist France, will be compelled in the end to break from the embrace of the U.S.A.' and 'take the path of independent development' (Stalin).

**Forward in 1953**

The signals are sounding for rapid political advance in 1953. The policies of economic ruin and increasing misery, of capitulation to the American Mad Dogs, and of military insanity and barbarous aggression against other nations, are deeply discredited. There is a genuine search for the alternative programme which can bring peace, national self-respect and economic hope. But the action of the people is necessary to win the way forward along this alternative path. A united fighting labour movement could bring the defeat of Toryism in 1953 and open the way to radical changes in policy. But the impetus to such advance cannot come from the present dominant leadership in the labour movement. A leadership which confines its parliamentry role to procedural votes of censure, while supporting the Government on every major practical action for war and against the people, and which directs its main offensive against its own supporters and the left, is no leadership for victory. Nor is it helpful for any group which may seek to express partial criticism in words to join the next minute in the American-inspired chorus of denunciation of the hundreds of millions in every country and continent who are marching forward in unity for the noble aims of the world peace movement. The battle of the common people in Britain, which conducted notable preliminary engagements at More-



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cambe and Margate and in the initial stages of the wage fight, needs to be carried forward to new heights in 1953. The dangers before Britain and the world in the coming year are grave. Unity of all who seek peace and a new future for Britain is the imperative condition to make 1953, not a year of further economic disaster and descent along the path to war, but a year of victories of the working people in the cause of peace and in the battle for a new policy for Britain.

*December 15, 1952.* R.P.D.

# TRADE UNIONISM IN 1953

PETER KERRIGAN

THE worsening economic outlook for 1953 in Britain will confront the trade unions with big problems. During 1952, the trade unions' wage demands, made in response to pressure from below, came up against increasing resistance. Even in those industries where some wage advance was secured—in the teeth of bitter opposition of private employers and of boards in nationalised industries, backed by the government every time—none got what they asked. In many cases, particularly in important basic industries, there was usually a flat refusal; and later, under pressure, an inadequate advance agreed on between the union officials and employers, to widespread protests from the rank and file.

Wages, however, are not keeping pace with prices. In October 1952 wage rates for men were 130 and for all workers 131, taking July, 1947 as 100. The official index of *retail* prices was 138 on the same basis: that is, men's wage rates in 1952 bought less than in 1947 by 6 per cent., or 1s. 2½d. in the pound. The effect of this on the workers has been increased because *earnings* (what they get in their pay-packet every week as a result of piece-work, overtime, etc.) are no longer rising faster than wage rates. The Ministry of Labour survey shows that between April 1951 to April 1952 men's earnings rose only 8.4 per cent., while retail prices as a whole rose 11.6 per cent. and food prices by 19 per cent. That gap has certainly widened during recent months as the Government continued reducing subsidies on foods and forcing up prices. It is important to emphasise this deliberate Tory policy because it is part of the answer to those who argue that wage increases mean automatically higher prices. Over the year to October, while retail prices rose by 7½ per cent., despite an actual fall of about 2 per cent. in wholesale prices, the increased prices paid by the workers were mainly due to



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removal of food subsidies to the tune of around £160 millions, taxation on petrol, increased purchase tax on goods previously tax free, like utility clothing, furniture, etc. The Tory government is preparing further instalments in 1953, with decontrol of eggs and removal of more subsidies, and a threat of even dearer bread, not to mention the discussions going on to prepare for legislation to permit of rent increases that would affect millions of homes. The worsened position in declining consumption by the workers is proven by the Government's own official figures which reveal that the total volume of goods bought in the shops in the second quarter of 1952 was 2½ per cent. less than a year before.

The picture is darker yet to trade union eyes; for this lowering has occurred despite widespread and systematic overtime working to augment earnings in practically every industry. Men's hours (April 1952—last figures available from Government) show an average of 47.3, which is evidence of a considerable amount of overtime. In coal mining it is reckoned that at least one eighth of the shifts worked are overtime shifts—at least three-quarters of the miners work a Saturday shift or overtime shift. Employers quote the earnings based on this overtime against conceding the workers' wage claims. The Coal Board have done it; so did Sir Alexander Ramsay, when rejecting the engineering unions' claim for £2. Moreover, he submitted figures from employers' sources to show that in May 1952 the average hours of a skilled fitter were 49.4 per week, turners, 48.2, labourers 50 hours, and the average 49.1—above even the Ministry of Labour's figure. *A most serious aspect is that overtime often occurs where there is extensive short time, in engineering and building etc.*

Also, there is a long list of unresolved wage claims: here are only some of the most important:

| Industry | Amount of Claim | Present Situation |
|---|---|---|
| Cotton textiles | 10% | Claim rejected |
| Tailoring | 6d. per hour | Claim rejected |
| Fire Brigades | £1 per week | Claim rejected |
| Draughtsmen | 30s. per week | Claim rejected |
| Builders | 6d. per hour | To be discussed January |
| Civil Servants (including P.O. workers) | 5% cost of living | Claim pending |
| Miners | 30s. per week | Offer of a few shillings for a few of the men rejected by the union |



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The miners' claim reveals a typical example of lowering standards and increased exploitation. In 1947 at the first wage settlement under nationalisation, the miners were awarded a minimum wage of £5 15s. underground and £5 on the surface, for a 5-day working week: since then the official cost of living index has risen by 37 per cent.; while productivity has risen by 11 per cent. (from 1.07 to 1.19 tons per man-shift). The miners would need £7 16s. 6d. underground and £6 16s. on the surface approximately, to compensate for the cost of living rise alone. What they do get now is £7 0s. 6d. underground and £6 1s. 6d. on the top. The miners are expected to put up with losing 16s. a week of their 1947 wage, while producing at the same time 11 per cent. more and making good their loss by overtime on top of that. Not only in Scotland and South Wales, but in many other districts, the demand is growing to amend the conciliation agreement, to restore to the union its right to use the power of the miners to enforce just wage demands, and the determination is developing to end systematic overtime in the shape of Saturday working. In engineering and shipbuilding, where widespread dissatisfaction with the last settlement exists, there is already developing pressure from factories, union branches and stewards for a new national wages claim, while they demand that the rate for women be brought up to equal the male workers' minimum. The trade unions' policy of a 40-hour week is becoming a vital factor in the fight against redundancy in engineering.

It is clear even in the industries most affected by the fall in home consumption and the more difficult export conditions—in textiles, clothing and the like—that the workers are determined to press forward for wage increases. In the private sector of industry profits are still soaring, or continue to keep very high levels, while in the nationalised industries the former shareholders get their profits regularly in the shape of the guaranteed interest. Growing awareness of this and of the need to go forward to maintain living standards is the guarantee that wage claims will be formulated and pressed with greater vigour than ever in 1953.

At the same time, many 1952 conferences showed that the trade unions are giving support to policies aimed at promoting East-West trade, easing international tension and finding a way out of the present crisis. At Margate the T.U.C. unanimously passed a resolution calling for

> Developing trading relations with all nations who are prepared to conclude commercial agreements . . . . Congress believes that in particular,



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> extensive trading relations with China, the U.S.S.R. and other Eastern countries would make a substantial contribution towards improving the present international situation. . . . Congress therefore calls upon all governments, regardless of their political systems, to act together without delay to discuss the possibility of extending trade and removing artificial barriers.

It is time that the General Council indicated what it has done to implement this resolution.

In 1951 British exports to Eastern Europe were under 25 per cent. of pre-war in quantity, despite great increase in the industrial and trade potential of those countries. The U.S.S.R., for example, at the Moscow Economic Conference offered to treble her trade with Britain to a figure of £227 millions, which would give steady work to at least 200,000 people—about half our present unemployed. The only condition is that we send to Russia the same type of exports as we sent pre-war. The scale of this potential trade is important. M. Alexandrov of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. pointed out that before the war Eastern Europe provided 35 per cent. of the timber imports of Britain, France and Belgium, and also 20 per cent. of the wheat, 18 per cent. of the fodder grain, and 20 per cent. of the eggs imported by Western Europe. The China trade, which was about £38 millions a year, has been cut to one-tenth.

In the fight for wages, trade and an easing of industrial tension, trade unionists are coming up against a most disquieting development. The right-wing leadership has intensified efforts to stop the rank and file making their voice heard in the trade unions in support of a progressive policy; witch-hunting and splitting tactics have been introduced. The main weight of the attack so far has been against the Trades Councils. Always closest to the rank and file, these bodies have been carrying on important campaigns on a whole host of issues, from increased fares, education cuts, housing programmes and rents, to organising the unorganised and 100 per cent. trade unionism. Now the General Council of the T.U.C. is trying to circumscribe their activities, to turn local councils into rubber-stamp bodies for General Council policy, irrespective of the views of the locally-affiliated trade union branches and district committees. First Glasgow and then London—the two premier Trades Councils in Britain, each with a record dating back before the existence of the T.U.C.—have been attacked. In London, 25 local trades councils have been deregistered because they objected to the T.U.C.'s action and affirmed support for the London Trades Council.



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The new so-called Federation of Trades Councils in London set up by the T.U.C. has only a minority of local Trades Councils affiliated. Its constitution is the most undemocratic it is possible to conceive. Trade union district committees or branches are to be prevented from sending whatever delegates they wish by the operation of a black circular. Unlike the present London Trades Council with a regular monthly meeting it is proposed that it shall meet only once in three months, and the main power will lie in the hands of the Executive Committee. This will be elected on a basis that could permit the Transport and General Workers and the Municipal and General Workers to have four members each, while the whole 38 unions in the engineering and shipbuilding trades, including the 850,000-strong A.E.U., the Boilermakers, Foundry Workers, Electricians and others *together* cannot possibly get more than four on the new E.C.

Another attack on the democratic rights of trade union members takes the form of direct interference by the T.U.C. against the unions' autonomy. For example, after themselves banning the World Conference for Peace in Vienna, the T.U.C. General Council wrote to Union executives to induce them not to send delegates. Bereft of any arguments, the right wing seek to use their control of the machine to gag the left and shackle the movement. However, united action is defeating this splitting. Proof of this is that 156 delegates are going to Vienna from factories, union branches, districts and areas with their colleagues in the Labour Party.

More and more workers are contrasting this bitter fight against the most active militant and progressive elements in the unions with the flabby, defeatist attitude to the real enemy—the capitalist class and its agent, the Tory Government. The textile union leader, Harry Earnshaw, in his Chairman's speech to the Labour Party Conference in Morecambe said: 'When we survey the catalogue of Tory misrule, we have to admit that their record is not as reactionary as it was before the war'. Imagine that, after the results of the Tory Government's policy in regard to Lancashire's life-blood, the textile industry! Imagine that, after attacks on living standards, refusal of wage advances, denationalising road transport, steel, etc.; proposals to kill the dock labour scheme by cutting the labour force in the ports, and the mass of other reactionary steps taken! No, gentlemen of the Right! You may hob-nob with workers' enemies. You may shout at rank and file delegates to 'shut your gob' and be first to



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arrive in your dress suits for the arch-reactionary Churchill's party—but you cannot hold back the growing movement.

Increasing united action on the job and among trade unionists is the answer, and it will grow in every pit, factory and depot. The fight for democracy in the unions is part, and an essential part, of the fight for wages, living standards and peace. More and more workers are coming into the trade unions and they are coming in as result of the tireless, unflinching work of the progressives in the factories and trade union branches. These workers are demanding regular consultation between the leadership and the rank and file. They are fighting for periodic election of officials where it does not exist at the moment. They are insisting on their democratic rights to formulate policy and to operate it, because increasingly they are concerned to win a way out of the crisis for their country along the way to independence, peace and socialism.

## FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

# THE MINERS' MARCH

The South Wales Miners' March to London is ended, but the lessons it taught those who participated in it will never be forgotten. Its varying phases covered in miniature fashion the whole gamut of our potential experiences in the struggle for class emancipation. 'Those starving in the backyards of the capitalist class' now see with a clearer vision the causes of poverty, and recognise the forces which can be expected to render assistance in the endeavours to secure relief. The question of Britain's economic decline is no longer hypothetical to those who are the first to express the symptoms of this condition. Capitalism's greatest contradiction is springing up out of the growing consciousness of its victims.

The march was at once the expression of the rapid decline of capitalist Britain, first demonstrating itself in her basic industry, and an indication of the capacity of the mass of the workers to express themselves over the heads of capitalist repression and its natural accompaniment, reformist sabotage. It was an effect and not a cause, and it was expressive of a deep under-lying consciousness that improvement could only be hoped for in consequence of nation-wide class unity expressing itself in national action.

From *The Significance of the Miners' March*, by Arthur Horner, January, 1928.



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# AFRICA IN FERMENT

DESMOND BUCKLE

THE events currently taking place in Africa south of the Sahara, notably in Kenya and the Union of South Africa, have thrust the liberation struggle of the African people into the forefront of world affairs. No longer can the vast, compact land mass, which constitutes the African continent, be regarded as some tranquil backwater in the affairs of the nations. Africa is no longer the happy hunting ground that it was once thought to be for world imperialism engaged in the extraction of huge quantities of loot from the so-called under-developed countries of the world.

The African people everywhere in the continent are raising in their millions a determined challenge to the rule of foreign imperialism which deprives them of the most elementary political rights, exploits them ruthlessly and condemns them to a position of permanent racial inferiority. The upsurge of the African people comes at a time when the crisis into which world imperialism entered as a result of World War I and the Great October Socialist Revolution has been greatly intensified following victory over Fascism in World War II and the emergence of the People's Democracies of Europe and People's China. It coincides with a period when the imperialists are counting on compensating themselves in Africa for the vast losses they have incurred through the removal of one-third of the globe outside the orbit of imperialism.

Nearly four years ago, when the revolutionary movements of Eastern Asia ranging from Northern China through the hills of Burma to Malaya and Indonesia were filling the imperialists with alarm, *The Times* (March 1, 1949) commented that 'with Communists either in the leadership or striving towards it, the challenge to Western security is at least as great as if Africa were in ferment'. Now Africa is, indeed, in ferment. And in the process the contradictions which dominate the relations between the subject people and their imperialist oppressors and the contradictions between the imperialists themselves have become sharper and deeper.

The struggle of colonial peoples against oppression and for freedom from alien domination is as old as the colonial system itself. The 19th century is replete with the battles which the African people, organised in tribal groups, as were the Zulus, Xhoses, Matabeles, Ashantis, Basutos and Hauses, fought to avert the imposition of



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imperialist rule. In the modern era there are the beginnings of an African bourgeoisie and an African working class and modern organisations of a mass character such as trade unions and mass political parties are coming to the front in national liberation movements.

At the beginning of the present century during its 'pacification' of Africa, British imperialism introduced a system of so-called 'Indirect Rule' which sought to utilise the tribal chiefs as subordinate instruments of British Rule. This system, first introduced by Lugard in East Africa, and the Glen Gray Act of 1894, the product of Rhodes and Hofmeyr in Cape Colony, set the pattern by which British imperialism was to concentrate African manpower in a way convenient to itself for the exploitation of the continent's resources. Thus were produced the native reserves of South and East Africa which range from relatively small areas of land to large 'Protectorates', like Bechuanaland, Swaziland, Basutoland and Nyasaland.

The impact of the imperialists' own economy has been to set in motion forces leading to social change and the break-up of the very tribalism which the British rulers were seeking to utilise for their own purposes.

The imposition of poll tax forced African males to leave their tribal villages and go to work on the farms of white settlers or in the mines. And the need to cultivate cash crops for a world market led to the development of individual ownership of land in place of the communal system of land tenure. The social revolution in the African countryside was well under way when World War II began. And the effect of the experiences of the war was to push it forward enormously. The tremendously increased rate of extraction of Africa's resources undertaken by the imperialists in the immediate post-war years has further stimulated the process of social change. The *Review of Economic Conditions in Africa* issued in February, 1951 by the UN Economic and Social Council revealed that in a span of about 12 years, from the pre-war period to 1948 several African territories greatly increased their number of wage earners. Kenya, for instance, had an increase of 85.4 per cent., whilst Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo had increases of 65.6 and 67 per cent. respectively. On the subject of their wages the report said:

> It is a significant paradox that, in the face of almost constant complaints of shortage of labour in Africa, the wages of Africans in many parts of Africa and over long periods have remained relatively static.



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Daily wage rates of Africans are as low as 2s. 3d. in the Belgian Congo and 1s. 2d. in Nigeria, whilst in Uganda the monthly rate ranges from about 20s. to 35s. Monthly rates in Tanganyika and Kenya vary between 21s. and 63s., and 21s. and 39s. respectively. The UN report stated further that it is probable that the average annual per capita income in tropical Africa is not more than £17 10s.

From the labour of these same Africans is produced 98.4 per cent. of the world's diamonds; 80 per cent. of its cobalt; 57.7 per cent. of its gold; 35.5 per cent. phosphates; 30 per cent. chrome ore and manganese; 18 per cent. copper; nearly all the columbite; 68.3 per cent. cocoa; 69.5 per cent. palm oil; 75.5 per cent. sisal; 40.4 per cent. hard fibres; and 15.35 per cent. coffee. There is little wonder that such vast resources and the even greater untapped wealth have attracted the attention of US imperialism. When the Marshall Plan was launched the US State Department made it clear that in 'partial return' for assistance received, the Marshallised countries would be expected to provide the US with certain badly needed raw materials—tin, industrial diamonds, rubber, manganese, chromium, copper, lead, zinc, etc.,—from 'within their own territory or that of their colonies, territories or dependencies . . . under an aggressive plan of exploitation, development and expansion of productive facilities'. And in November, 1950, a group of President Truman's special advisers on Foreign Economic Policy reported that:

> . . . . despite the fact that Africa's known resources are only partially developed, it is the source of a substantial and for some commodities a major part of our supplies of certain strategic and critical materials.

While the European imperialists are engaged in intensifying the exploitation of Africa on their own account they are at the same time faced with the problem of satisfying the demands of the major imperialism. Thus African workers have to produce a considerable surplus over and above what was previously required of them. British imperialism therefore attempts to secure conditions in its African territories which, whilst strengthening its own grip, at the same time meet the demands of American dollar imperialism. Being under such pressure, it is, in securing these conditions, adopting methods which more and more take on an American character. This and the need to push ahead more rapidly with war strategic plans in Africa account for the present savage repression taking place in Kenya, and the determination of the Tory government, reported in the *Financial Times* (October 23, 1952) to have the



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Central African Federation plan passed before the Summer recess despite the overwhelming opposition of the African people of the Rhodesias and Nysaland. Until quite recently British imperialism weathered its crises in Africa without any suggestion of loss of control. When in February, 1948, the Gold Coast, the 'model colony' rose in revolt the imperialists were astute enough to grant a new constitution by which they appeared to give the shadow of power into African hands. A similar manoeuvre took place in Nigeria following the Enugu shootings in 1949.

In the post-war period new constitutions have been the fashion in Africa. In those territories where conditions of extreme crisis obtain and where the upsurge of the people threatens to develop into revolution with the aim of the immediate overthrow of imperialism, a show of 'handing over power' is made. In these cases imperialism in search of new allies to replace the chiefs, whose power and influence has waned with the break-up of the tribal system, directs its favours towards the rising bourgeois elements. With these elements imperialism forges a counter-revoluntionary alliance against the working-class, against the liberation movement, so as to maintain intact the essential economic and strategic interests of imperialism. Where the stage of political development is not so far advanced only minor 'concessions' are made, such as one, two or three more seats on a legislative council. Whatever the step taken it is always ensured that political power is left effectively where it was and where it is intended to remain.

Imperialism still has room in which to manoeuvre in Africa. But space is getting exceedingly small. The imperialists are being daily faced with new problems arising from the fact that the African people have not only developed a sense of unity and discipline among themselves, but are also increasingly forging unity with other peoples, first of all, as in the Union of South Africa, with the other non-European people who live among them. A great responsibility rests on the British working class and democratic movement to respond actively in support of this rising struggle of the African peoples, and thus to help to forge the common victory which can ensure a new and happier future, freed from the fetters of imperialism, equally for the African and British peoples.

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# IMPRESSIONS OF CHINA

New Democracy

BENJAMIN FARRINGTON

IT is often objected to the returned traveller that it is not possible to see much of a strange country in a few weeks. Still, it is better to go than not to go; and what you see depends on what you are given the chance to see and what you are capable of seeing. The party I was with in China in September was invited by the Chinese People's Institute for Foreign Affairs and was accorded the most generous facilities for studying conditions in the country. It was also large enough to include experts in a great variety of subjects. There were Members of Parliament, Physicians, Professors, Scientists, Authors, Journalists, Lawyers, Actors, a Playwright, a Musician, an Architect, a Miners' Leader, and prominent persons in various women's movements. In Peking we visited various Government offices where responsible officials, sometimes the Ministers in charge of the most important Departments of State, gave us many hours of their time, expounding to us the work of their Departments and submitting to be questioned. We went by rail to Nanking, Shanghai, Hangkow, Canton. Everywhere we had facilities for studying Public Health, Penal Institutions, Education, and so on. We broke up into groups for these special investigations and afterwards pooled our information. We were also given ample pocket-money, which set us free to go where we liked unattended. We met innumerable interesting persons at receptions, banquets, forums, visits to institutions; and if we wished to pursue conversation further with any individual, a request that he be invited to talk to us in private at our hotel was readily granted. My visit to China was short. But I have never elsewhere had such opportunities created for me to study a country, nor have I ever entered into such frank and cordial relations with any other people. The Chinese behaved as if they had something very precious to show us (as I, for my part, soon came to feel they had), and the result was that

> None talked that common, false, cold hollow talk
> Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes.

It may be lacking in 'objectivity' to say that we trusted our hosts. But it is the truth, and I am glad to record the damaging fact.



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# WORKERS OF ROME

*These drawings, by the Italian artist Mazzullo, depict peasants, who, deprived of their land, are only able to obtain occasional employment as casual labourers.*

*Weeding*

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. . by MAZZULLO

*The Labourer*

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Among the most impressive of our experiences was the Forum held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on September 10. There Mr. Hsieh Chueh-tsai, Minister for Internal Affairs of the People's Central Government, set forth at length the Chinese conception of New Democracy. His statement and his answers to our many questions occupied about four hours. I shall try in a page or two to summarise what he told us, keeping as closely as possible to his own words as they were translated to us.

Under former conditions the Chinese people had no political rights. Since Liberation, having triumphed over Feudalism, Imperialism, and Compradorism, they are masters in the land. The significance of the revolution, however, is not confined to China. The Chinese revolution is part of the world revolution; and though it cannot yet be described as a proletarian revolution, that will come.

The theory behind the revolution is Marxism-Leninism. The experience of the Russian revolution and the development of the U.S.S.R. under Stalin have been fundamental for China. But the Chinese Communist Party is thirty years old and has, of course, been guided also by Chinese revolutionary experience. The revolution has required the application of Marxism-Leninism to the semi-colonial conditions of China, and in making this application Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese communists have made an independent development of Marxism-Leninism. State power rests at present on the United Front of the Chinese people. But the leading power in the State is the working class, and the working class is led by its party, the Communist Party of China.

The State power is democratic. Its mode of operation is Democratic Centralism. All elections are made by congresses of the people, but those elected to power exercise power. The result is not an anarchic babel of tongues, but a way of finding the path and all moving along it together. The chief obstacle at present is the uneven development of the country and the weakness of communications of every sort. At present this affects all organs of government and hampers all work of government.

The people's State Power rests on the concrete situation at each phase of the revolution. But everywhere liberation means suppression of the Kuo-min-tang. Then people's congresses are convoked as soon as possible. The endeavour is made to secure representation of all elements of the population, duly elected in properly constituted congresses by all persons male and female over 18 years of age.



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But since, in such a vast area as China, full representation of all interests is difficult to secure, the matter is not left to chance. Individuals may be invited to participate in the work of congress on certain conditions. Distinguished 'patriotic personages' are invited, if it is thought likely they can help. Various groups are specially invited to send representatives. Such groups and personages are the People's Volunteers, the Liberation Army, Labour Models, Farm Models, leaders of religion, persons prominent in literature or art or the professions. No limit is set to the types that may be invited to attend. This is a novel form of democracy which makes its will peculiarly effective. If a thing is to be done, it must be done; if not; not. New Democracy has nothing in common with the parliamentary system existing in bourgeois political democracies.

In the New China many other classes are protected as well as the working class—peasants, middle peasants, rich peasants, petty bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie. How, then can the working class realise its leadership and make it effective? This results from past history and from the actual situation. There never was any chance at any period that the national bourgeoisie could seize power in China. On the contrary, they were among those who suffered under the domination of Bureaucratic Capitalism which acted as the agent of imperialism in China. It was therefore possible to take the National Bourgeoisie along in the struggle against imperialism, as it was also possible to take the rich peasants along in the struggle against landlordism. Common interests were revealed in the course of the actual struggle against the Kuo-min-tang. In practice the problem of co-operation has not proved insoluble. The majority rules, but not without consideration of minority views. Unity of view and action is usually achieved.

At the present moment unity between the Government and the National Bourgeoisie is essential. But the Bourgeoisie shows itself amenable to Government direction. Examples of this direction are the two great movements of San Fan and Wu Fan launched this spring against the eight chief vices affecting industry and commerce. These vices were such things as betrayal of Government secrets to outside powers, tax evasion, use of inferior materials and false description of goods. Approaches by Government to Industry and Commerce asking them to rid themselves of these vices proved effective. This is an example of the ideological remoulding that is taking place in every section of Chinese society. It affects the workers and every grade of peasants as much as the bourgeoisie.



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The Chinese Government finds that promulgating decrees is not enough. It is necessary to show how they can be carried out and encourage people to execute them. Accordingly various movements of moral reform are launched. Such are San Fan and Wu Fan. Such are the campaigns for Hygiene and Land Reform. Such are movements like Aid Korea, Resist American Imperialism, the Peace Appeal, the Five Power Pact. The people love and guard their State Power, and their happiness is beyond description. They themselves, in consequence of their new experiences, are continually setting up new cultural and other demands. On the other hand they respond to appeals from their government in a way impossible under capitalism. For instance, in the great projects to control the flood-waters in the river valleys as many as ten million persons all over the country responded to the appeal for volunteers.

These benefits are not confined to the Han people. They extend also to the non-Chinese peoples living on Chinese territory. There are sixty National Minorities comprising 40 million people. Among them 130 autonomous governments have been set up. These and other accompanying steps have created an unprecedented unity throughout Chinese territory. Proof of this is the fact that 60 thousand members of national minorities are in government posts throughout China.

The question of the Fraternal Peoples, or National Minorities, was the last with which the Minister dealt. He concluded his address with a simple and dignified expression of his hope for friendship between our two peoples.

Expressions of admiration for his personality and intellect were general afterwards in our party. Furthermore our subsequent experience confirmed what he said. We did find unmistakable signs of the joy and enthusiasm of the people under the new regime. To walk through the parks and find the young people with their eyes glued to the exhibits, sent perhaps from Czechoslovakia or Poland, of new machinery; to come perhaps on a gathering of civilians and army men to whom a girl with a voice like a bell was teaching one of their new songs, to stand with them for a moment and be presented with a copy of the words and music; to walk through a housing estate with the children following and hanging from one, and to induce them to sing one of their new songs (perhaps the one with the refrain, *All the Peoples of the World have one Heart*); to fall into conversation with any of our guides and interpreters and hear from their own lips their eager and unembarrassed stories



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of their changed lives—these were experiences not easy to convey to others but impossible to misinterpret. They refreshed my spirit as no other political experience has ever done.

In my last article I spoke of our experience of New Democracy in a Chinese village. Let me conclude now with a few words about its manifestation in the towns. In the cities and in the towns every street and every side-street has its own unit of government with very extensive powers. This was one of those Government-inspired movements to which the people have responded with a zeal that must be seen to be believed. 'We rely for the support of the people', the Minister for Internal Affairs had told us, 'not simply on the representative character of our congresses, but on the policies which they put out'. And what an inspired policy this is! We studied its workings both in Shanghai and in Peking. Every alley and street has its council. These come under the area councils. These under the district councils, and these in their turn under the municipality. The councils have a variety of functions—hygiene, housing repairs, preferential treatment and comforts for dependents of army men, education and culture, etc., etc. They have no connection with the police, trade unions or Communist Party, but are elected annually by all inhabitants over 18 years of age. It was they who mobilised the people to kill the flies. It is they who conduct the war on rats and mice. It is they who are responsible for the behaviour of all convicted persons whose sentences are less than three years. It is they who supervise the work of the co ops. There were twelve or fourteen of these alley-leaders, five of whom were women, in the group whom I met. Our meeting was in the house of the Chairman of the Hygiene Committee for the Area. I shall not soon forget the exquisite cleanliness of this side-street in Peking; the dignified bearing and dancing eyes of our host, an old man in a dove coloured robe that stretched from chin to feet; and the air of serious merriment that infected us all as we learned of the details of their recent achievement of self-government and shared with them in their new-found happiness. We felt so much at home that we even plucked up courage to inquire when they were going to start a campaign against spitting. Their answer was charged with that good sense and practicability we seemed to encounter everywhere. 'We are busy making handkerchiefs now, and as soon as we have enough, we intend to open the campaign'. Yes, in small things as in big the same mood is everywhere. *Yo banfa,* there's always a right way of doing things.



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# THE FORRESTAL DIARIES

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

THIS is a curious book.* One must consider firstly of what it consists; and secondly, what is its value or use; and thirdly—most important of all—why has it been written and published (and why just now, in 1952)?

The haphazard diaries of the late Mr. Forrestal, comprising in all at least 500,000 words, cover a period of four and a half years (July, 1944 to January 1948); the entries were dictated unsystematically, and apparently not corrected by him; they were silent or almost silent on events of the greatest importance (as for example the initiation of the Marshall Plan) and were sometimes silent altogether for many days or even weeks; and they often recorded other people's statements or opinions without indicating whether Forrestal himself agreed with them or not. Moreover, reasons of security led to the omission of a small—but presumably important—percentage of the material and to the paraphrasing of other parts of it; and 'tidying-up' and the desire not to present an unduly long book has involved cutting out no less than two-thirds of the total of what Forrestal wrote.

Thus, to start with, what we are able to read of Forrestal's own writing is something which—as the two editors of the book† tell us—he himself would surely not have published without a great deal of revision, and it is of its nature uneven and not wholly reliable. It starts too late and ends too soon to give a whole picture; and one cannot ignore the difficulty that Forrestal was definitely insane very shortly after the date at which the entries end, and it is not clear at what stage in the four years he passed over the borderline.

There is one further defect, perhaps more serious still, in that, after cutting out two-thirds of the diaries, the editors have then added matter of their own which amounts to 40 per cent. of the total. These are described in the Preface and the blurb as 'such editorial comment as seemed necessary for continuity and understanding', and as 'an informative series of links to connect the day to day entries'; but they are in fact far more than that. In a rather

*_The Forrestal Diaries_, Edited by Walter Millis, with the collaboration of E. S. Duffield. (542pp. Cassell 25/-).

†The first of the editors is a leader writer on the _New York Herald Tribune_, and the second, also a newspaper man, was special assistant to Forrestal from 1942 to some time in 1945 covering only a small part of the period of the diaries.



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mawkish fashion, reminding one sometimes of a Greek chorus and sometimes of a news-reel commentator 'ladling out the obvious', the editors give us a mass of additional, and at times highly biased, narrative, often of important events which Forrestal passed over in his diaries; at one point, indeed, the 'link' creates for itself a sort of independent life, like the robots in the last act of Karel Capek's play, and reflects the usual Western-propaganda nonsense about the events in Czechoslovakia in February, 1948, about which Forrestal himself is wholly silent, except that he records Henry Wallace's perfectly accurate statement that the events had been brought about by the threat of a Rightist coup (adding that 'nothing could be sillier'!). And in September, 1945, as can be seen below, the editors give a completely misleading account of a most important event.

We thus have an additional complication; two-fifths of the material of *The Forrestal Diaries* is not merely not Forrestal—although some of the 'comment' includes bits of quotations from his diaries which are not printed as such, or from his letters or recorded telephone calls—but one has little means of judging its value, nor even of knowing which of the two newspaper men wrote it.

So we have in reality not a diary but a book written by three people, one of whom did not know he was writing it, had no say in its publication, and could not of course revise it.

Before considering the main topics dealt with in the book, it is well to get some sort of picture—from the book itself and a biographical sketch given by the editors—of Forrestal as a man. His '*curriculum vitae*' is fairly simple.

As a young man in 1916, he joined what was later Dillon Read & Co., 'put all his capabilities for initiative, hard work, and thorough study into the business of *selling bonds*', and by 1938 he was President of that large financial concern. Then, 'having made his own fortune, Forrestal was undoubtedly urged by his strong sense of obligation toward service to his country', and held various government positions, first under President Roosevelt and then under President Truman from 1940 until shortly before his death in May, 1949. Although a touch of hero worship in one or both of the editors should help to present a human picture, it is not easy to catch much of Forrestal's personality except in terms of his beliefs and obsessions, which were and are shared by probably a very large number of Americans of his class and age. He had what many British readers would regard as a thoroughly reactionary standpoint; although full of fears, he entertains no doubt of the perfection



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and viability of America's economic system called by its admirers capitalism, freedom, Christianity, or the Western way of life; and he hates, as fully as he misunderstands them, Communism, Socialism, the Soviet Union, labour and—gradually developing—anybody who disagrees with his outlook; Henry Wallace, for example, was a perfect bogey to him, and as early as April, 1947, he wanted to have a passport refused to Wallace, an ex-Vice President and ex-Cabinet Minister, because he was proposing to make speeches of a liberal trend with which Forrestal disagreed! He was equally angry with Elliott Roosevelt and Dr. H. V. Evatt, just for disagreeing with his views. He saw no inconsistency, of course, between this attitude and the stock diatribes against the U.S.S.R. for 'suppressing freedom of speech'. (Notice in passing that the U.S. Attorney-General on the other hand wanted to let Wallace have the passport, and then to refuse to readmit him to his own country; this political lawyer, now a judge of the U.S. Supreme Court, did not even know that he had no power to exclude him). Forrestal could see, according to his editors, (although there is little evidence of this in the book) 'all sides of a question', but they regarded this old-fashioned attitude as 'symptomatic of his divided state of mind'.

One particular characteristic is worth notice; the idea that there is something almost mythical—an 'imponderable element' which synthesises everything—about the capacity of 'business-men' to administer public service better than anybody else; this is the old illusion, described by Bernard Shaw, that a lifetime spent in enriching yourself by systematically preferring your own private interest to that of the community can in some way qualify you to prefer the interest of the community to your own.

That he was an Imperialist of the Joynson Hicks type becomes pretty clear. He displays almost an eagerness for aggression and interference everywhere—of, in effect, an intention to fight what he calls Communism wherever he sees it, in a hot war—in short, world war to defend capitalism. This is well illustrated by his description in March 1948 of the full form of conscription for which he was always campaigning, 'U.M.T.' (universal military training). He calls it 'an act of dedication', 'clear evidence to the world that we did not propose to abdicate our responsibilities in Europe or anywhere else in combating the rising and spreading tide of Communism'. And he makes another revealing slip in the same week, when he says that the rejection of U.M.T. by the House of Representatives would 'show a split in the country, which would be interpreted *as a vote*



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*against war*'! Over the so called 'blockade' of Berlin, he was equally ready for provocative action, 'accepting the possibility of war'. He wanted the Army to be strong enough to *seize* and hold bases overseas, and he spoke tragically of the Senate tendency to 'flee into hopes of disarmament' rather than give as much money to the forces as he wanted.

He also insisted that the various islands in the Pacific were absolutely essential to the 'defence' of the U.S.A.; he would not tolerate even a U.N.O. mandate. The islands were, to him, America's 'future strategic basis', the 'fulcra of our defensive strength', 'defence posts necessary to the big power responsible for the security of the area'—who allotted the U.S.A. this job?—'of primary importance not merely to the security of the United States but of the world', which 'we propose . . . to keep . . . (and) to exercise our ownership as a trust on behalf of world security'. And when the danger arose, through the San Franciso conference, that the new world organisation might be thought the proper body to control such islands, the State Department represented his point of view when it asserted that 'any general system should include provisions for the maintenance of full American military and strategic rights *at appropriate points*' (my italics).

This, of course, from people who accuse the U.S.S.R. of interfering with other countries' independence; who tell us that 'the Marxian dialectic . . . is incompatible with democracy . . . because it rests upon the willingness to apply force to gain the end'; and who react violently against the Soviet Union's wish to have a say in the control of the Dardanelles, the key which can lock up the whole Black Sea, and who are indeed prepared to go to war rather than consent to any such measure of control.

Somewhat similar is Forrestal's equally strong insistence that the U.S.A. should have naval forces permanently in the Mediterranean, 'to carry out American policy and diplomacy'; among other things, he asserts that Alexander (the Labour Defence Minister) and the First Sea Lord, in July 1946, expressed disappointment that the Americans had not gone into the Mediterranean! And we find this lover of free determination planning to set up in Crete a rival government for Greece if the one already established is not 'satisfactory', and to fill the country with 'operatives' (i.e., spies and saboteurs) who will secure information and cause trouble. He indeed wanted the U.S. Navy to have units stationed in all waters



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everywhere, as a regular practice, so that their movements 'should not be a matter for excitement'.

Forrestal was, in short, a typical apostle of 'containment' by force. For capitalist rulers, faced with the advance of the world towards Socialism, or with the earlier stage of revolution that consists in the demand of millions of colonial peoples for bread, health, education, and freedom, there are several possible reactions. They can recognise these movements for what they really are, or they can call them Soviet imperialist aggression. And they can seek to head them off for a while by honest competition—i.e., by an attempt so to improve the lives of 'their own' masses as to retain their allegiance for a while—or they can plan to resist them by fomenting subversion or sabotage, by seducing Titos, or by starting the third world war. We are left in no doubt as to where Forrestal stands in this dilemma.

That being something of a picture of the man and his outlook and policies, let me turn to examine the main topics of the book. There are really three. The first, which falls into two or three subdivisions, is a seemingly endless story, stage by stage, of a sort of civil war between the three combatant services of the U.S.A., each seeking in its own interest to secure both the maximum control of fighting operations and the largest share of the money that can be extracted from what in Britain we would call the Treasury. (One impression one gets is that there is full truth in the story told in the second world war that, whatever doubts some people may have had as to who was the real enemy we were fighting, the U.S. Army at any rate was clear that it was the U.S. Navy, and vice versa.) Intimately connected with this civil war is the story of Forrestal's prolonged efforts to establish machinery for the more efficient co-ordination of the three services, and to make that machinery work when it had been established. And equally important as a part of the first topic are Forrestal's long efforts firstly to secure not merely conscription but conscription in its full form of universal military training (U.M.T.) in order to secure the expansion of American power, and secondly to establish the atom bomb as a priority weapon, to be used without hesitation.

The second outstanding topic—the most important thing, probably, in the whole book—is the history of continous, implacable, obsessed, unreasoning, all-pervading hostility, in word and deed, to the U.S.S.R. In all the vast arsenal of capitalist malevolence there is scarcely a single lie about that country that is not repeated in the



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book; no misrepresentation is too silly for this trio to relate; a thousand well-established refutations of a story make no difference to them. The ignorance and credulity of all three of the writers is almost incredible; and their hatred becomes an obsession which forms the basis of every thought, every dream, every nightmare—and, what is far worse, every decision. They never waver in acting on their own hostility except during the period in 1945 when they thought they needed Soviet help on a very large scale—indeed, sixty divisions—in order to defeat Japan. But it is most interesting and significant that, like many other American haters of the Soviet Union, Forrestal finds himself unable to believe that that country wants war, or that it will commit aggression. In ten different passages, spread over a long period, citing as witnesses (among others) Eisenhower, Harriman, Bedell Smith, and the fire eating General Clay, he records that the Soviet Union does not want war; and nowhere does he assert, or quote any assertion, that it does. From the pen of a man able to believe the fantastic rubbish which he retails in the book, this is a most remarkable tribute, which goes a long way to destroy all justification for the policies of Forrestal and of the whole American ruling class.

The third and last topic is probably the most interesting to British readers; it consists of many glimpses of the conduct of British politicians, and of the conduct of the Americans in their dealings with Britain. Some of these glimpses are important, but one has to bear in mind that they may be unreliable as coming from the unrevised dictations of a witness who was not well-informed and who was progressing towards a mental breakdown. The various incidents should be assessed like a court assesses the evidence of an unreliable witness; many may be acceptable if corroborated or inherently probable, but others cannot be taken too seriously.

Something must be said on each of these three main topics.

The first is not very directly interesting or important on its own merits; the details of the struggle matter little, and the setting is not very familiar to British readers, owing to the differences of constitutional structure. But there is much value in the light which the moves in this 'civil war' throw on other problems, such as the policy of the atom bomb, and on the personality of Forrestal.

On the atom bomb, for example, it is interesting to see the effects on policy of the obsession of Forrestal and others that the U.S.A. was too weak in a military sense to do the many things they wanted



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it to do—to rule the Pacific, the Mediterranean, Europe, and indeed most of the world, to 'resist Communism everywhere', to avoid creating a 'vacuum' which—by another obsession—he was convinced would be automatically filled by 'the Russians' if America ever gave up 'protecting' anybody anywhere. As they understood the position, they had two main alternative policies. The first of these was to build up very large forces by full conscription, so that they could fight anywhere against any enemy, and the second was to rely upon the atom bomb as the main instrument of American policy, indeed, to adopt and act upon the view that the whole war policy of the U.S.A. would be confined to atom bombing carried on 'with England as a base'. This not only involved being ready and willing to use the bomb without hesitation, but it also put Britain in the front line, since it is geographically far and away the best base from an American point of view. (The position is only rendered more horrible by its futility; for it was of course based on two fallacies, the first that the U.S.A. had a monopoly of the atom bombs, and the second that you can win a war with bombs alone.)

The 'vacuum' obsession helped to lead Forrestal to another curious attitude. Since, in his view, any vacuum will be filled at once by what he calls 'chaos and communism', or 'Russia', and since the second World War, by eliminating Japan and Germany, created vacua, it follows—and he goes very near expressly asserting —that war was not a 'good thing'; and certainly it should have been fought on Churchillian rather than Rooseveltian lines, with a strong political eye on future 'vacua', so as to thwart the Soviet Union everywhere, even (he says in so many words) if the war had to be prolonged for six months to a year to achieve this end. His general outlook is such that, in discussing whether Churchill was right in seeking to concentrate on the 'soft underbelly' of Europe in order to 'keep the Russians out of the Balkans', he discusses what would have been 'the right counterstroke to the Russians'—just the phrase one uses in war *of one's enemy*. And as early as May, 1945, he and his friends are considering the alternatives of China (Chiang Kai-shek) or Japan for use by America as 'counterweights to Russian influence'. Some of the unguarded expressions of this hostility are most illuminating. Of January, 1945, the editors write almost with dismay that 'the Russian armies were now deep in Poland'; and at the same time Forrestal writes a good deal about the grave position from which the American armies had to be rescued in the Ardennes without even a mention of



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the help given by the Soviet armies—at sensational speed and with great sacrifices—to achieve that rescue.

On the second topic, one could quote at indefinite length the many illustrations of the pathological hatred displayed towards the U.S.S.R., and towards anything savouring of Socialism or even of change. Some of the samples one could quote would revolt decent unobsessed people. Some risk the loss of tens of millions of lives, and the waste of thousands of millions of pounds.

On the third topic, of the attitude of the British to American domination, and of the rulers of America to the British, there are a certain number of remarkable revelations, of varying degrees of reliability. One of the most astonishing of these concerns the stationing of U.S. combatant forces in this country as 'the main base' of atomic war against the U.S.S.R., a war to be started, of course, when the American government thinks fit, and to make Britain a first priority target for counter-bombing in a war in which she would not be allowed even to exercise the sovereign right to be neutral. On the 27th June, 1948, 'consideration was given' (in Washington) 'as to whether it would be advisable to have two B-29 groups'—'known throughout the world as the atomic bombers'—'in England'. The British government were asked for their views, the American Ambassador in Britain being 'instructed to ask Bevin whether he had fully explored and considered the effect of the arrival of these two groups in Britain upon British public opinion'. 'Somewhat to the surprise of the Americans', Ernest Bevin replied on the same or the following day accepting the proposal unconditionally. The Americans then decided to send the bombers, basing their decision on the grounds, *inter alia*, that 'it would give the Air Force experience in this kind of operation'—Greece, it may be noticed, was also being used as a guinea-pig—'it would accustom the British to the necessary habits and routines that go into the accommodation of an alien, even though an allied, power', and that 'we have the opportunity *now* of sending these planes, and once sent they would become somewhat of an accepted fixture, whereas a deterioration of the situation in Europe might lead to a condition of mind under which the British would be compelled to reverse their present attitude.'

This part of the story looks intrinsically acceptable and it is interesting to see how the British government then dealt with its public opinion, the public opinion which Bevin had apparently either ignored altogether, or 'considered' and swept aside in an hour



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or two. The definite decision to send the two groups (inevitably to be followed by many others) to Britain as a permanent part of the American war machine was made on the 15th July, 1948; and two days later a joint announcement of the British Air Ministry and the U.S. Air Force appeared in the Press, to the effect that two groups of B-29's were on their way to Britain 'for a short period of temporary duty, as part of the normal long-range flight training programme instituted over a year ago'; and two days later again, on their arrival, their commanding officer described the enterprise as 'an ordinary training mission such as they had made to Japan' and added that he did not know how long they would stay. (This latter remark, I suppose, was true!) And, a week later, the British Air Minister made a speech of welcome to these first peace-time military occupants of his native country, saying that 'peace time visits and exchanges between the U.S.A.F. and the R.A.F. were developing naturally on a broad basis of goodwill, comradeship, and common interest'. In private, if Forrestal is to be accepted as correct, British Ministers were more realistic. In October, 1948, Sir Stafford Cripps told Forrestal that 'Britain must be regarded as the main base for the deployment of American power, and the chief offensive against Russia must be by air'. This apparent willingness to sacrifice our independence and our lives may be due to what the book calls the 'two main motives of the British government: a passionate desire for military and diplomatic co operation with the U.S. coupled with the fear of our economic power'. In November, again according to Forrestal, Mr. Attlee told him that 'there is no division in the British public mind about the use of the atomic bomb—*they were for its use*!'

Another field in which the attitude to Britain is interesting is that of financial help. We are accused of concealing our assets like a shifty debtor in order to get help. We are scornfully reproached for building a large Embassy in Rio de Janeiro when we claim to be poor. A 'serious question' is raised as to whether the Americans 'should underwrite the stability of a government whose objectives seem to be moving farther to the Left'—this was in August, 1947, when Harriman had succeeded in dismaying himself by the discovery of a group of 'extreme Left-wingers' led by Laski, Zilliacus and Crossman! We are, of course, also accused—just as we are by our own Tories—of not working hard enough. Then, the question of Hong Kong (in May, 1945) is put as: 'Should we try to get the British out, or try to persuade the Chinese to come to some



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arrangement by which they'—the British—'should have some rights there?' And in 1948, the British delegates to a planning conference could, Forrestal thought, easily be left 'to cool their heels for a couple of weeks while we decided on a new strategic concept'. Much of this must be fairly reliable; but there are other stories, such as one about Chamberlain from the vulgar and blatant Ambassador Kennedy, which one would hesitate to believe.

What is the value or use of all this? The answer is, surely, not much. This disconnected jumble of entries over a few years can have no more than limited reliability or interest, and in my view its main value is to provide a little additional raw material for historians to use in filling out a picture, or in cross-checking a story.

This makes the third question all the more important: why has trouble been taken to prepare and publish this odd and not directly useful book, particularly after this lapse of time? The nature of the book, and particularly of the portions not written by Forrestal, point pretty strongly to the conclusion that the book is published as war-propaganda, designed not merely to feed the flames of anti-Soviet hatred but more specifically to work up public opinion in America to accept—as for the moment it is accepting—fantastic and ever growing expenditure on war-preparations. A very large part of the book, if read by someone reasonably deceivable—and have not the ruling Americans spent almost as much on the means of deceit as on the means of destruction?—is admirably adapted to secure their acquiescence in more war preparation and more war.

The book as a whole gives a sense of the terrible hopelessness, frustration, and lack of purpose of the capitalist 'way of life'. It ought not to be possible for anyone with a measure of objectivity to read this book and believe that capitalism can work. Lincoln Steffens wrote over 30 years ago, of the New Soviet World: 'I have seen the future, and it works.' We should say, today, looking at what used to be the New World: 'I have seen the dying present, and it doesn't'.

Lord Alexander of Hillsborough writes a friendly little Introductory Note to the book, which treats the Labour Government in which he was Minister of Defence with ill-informed but blistering contempt.



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# PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY IN COUNTRIES OF THE EAST

*Report of a conference held in the History and Philosophy Department of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., at the Institute of Oriental Studies, on the nature and peculiarities of people's democracy in the countries of the East. (Izvestia of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. History and Philosophy Series, Jan-Feb., 1952, Vol. IX, No. 1).*

THE conference (held between November 12 and 23, 1951) was opened by corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., E. M. Zhukov, who gave a report on the subject 'The peculiarities of people's democracy in the East'. He declared that the path to socialism through people's democracy has been shown to be equally suitable for developed capitalist countries and for backward colonial and dependent countries. The four people's-democratic states created by Eastern peoples—the Chinese People's Republic, the Mongolian People's Republic, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam—in spite of the different conditions in which they arose, the different development of the people's democratic regimes in each of these countries, and the great differences in their economic and cultural levels, can all be counted as belonging to a common group of Eastern countries of people's democracy.

The fundamental difference between the Eastern countries of people's democracy and the Western countries of people's democracy consists in the fact that, at the present stage, people's democracy in the Eastern group of countries is carrying out the national-liberationist and anti-feudal tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the task of building socialism does not present itself as something for the near future, and consequently, people's democracy is not fulfilling the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The main cause of this state of affairs is the colonial oppression to which these countries were subject until recently; this retarded the economic development of the Eastern countries and hindered the liquidation of barbarous survivals of the Middle Ages which were particularly burdensome to the peasantry, who form the overwhelming majority of the people of Asia. The overcoming of the general economic and cultural backwardness which is the inevitable result of the past colonial oppression requires a long time and does not permit a forcing of the solution of the tasks of the bourgeois-



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democratic revolution into a brief space of time, as was possible in the European countries of people's democracy. Although the latter were also oppressed by imperialism in the past, they did not know prolonged colonial enslavement.

The need to overcome the consequences of imperialist bondage which has lasted for centuries, and which was always closely linked with feudal oppression, sets its mark on the whole character of people's democratic power in the Eastern countries. People's democracy in the East bears a clearly-expressed anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character and is based on a broad coalition of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal forces which includes not only the workers, the peasants and the urban petty-bourgeoisie but also the national bourgeoisie (medium and small manufacturers and merchants). The foundation of people's democratic power is the alliance of the workers and the peasants under the leadership of the working class. People's democracy in the countries of the East is a special form of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, carrying out an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal policy in close collaboration with the national bourgeoisie and with all those social groups capable of taking up a position in defence of national independence against the encroachment of the imperialists and in support of the anti-feudal struggle of the peasantry.

While speaking of the Eastern countries of people's democracy as a single entity, E. M. Zhukov said that one must not forget the great differences between one people's democratic country and another. In analysing the questions of the peculiarities and nature of people's democracy in the East, it was necessary to recall the three important tactical principles of Leninism which J. V. Stalin formulated in 1927 in his work 'Notes on topics of the day'.* The rapporteur spent some time in characterising the existing states of People's Democracy—the Mongolian People's Republic, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Chinese People's Republic, emphasising the need to study the special features of each country and the inadvisability of any 'stereotyping' in connection with this problem. He paid special attention to the situation in the Chinese People's Republic, particularly to the successes achieved in creating a single people's democratic front, in agrarian reform and in the agrarian policy of the Communist Party.

* Collected Works, Vol. IX, p. 331.



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The experience of the Chinese Revolution is enormously important. The results of its fruitful influence can easily be perceived in the documents of the Communist Party of India and of the Vietnam Party of Labour. But, remembering the first tactical principle of Leninism, the principle of the necessity of taking into account the national peculiarities and specific national features of each separate country, it would be rash to see the Chinese Revolution as any sort of 'standard' for the people's democratic revolution in the other countries of Asia. In particular, one can hardly suppose that the other countries of Asia, travelling along the path of people's democracy, can necessarily reckon on obtaining the most important advantage of the Chinese Revolution—a revolutionary army. This does not mean, however, that there are not thousands of problems the solution of which by the advanced people of India, Indonesia or any other country of the East will not require study of the actual experience of the Chinese Revolution or that of the October Revolution in Russia.

Common to all the people's democracies, both those of the West and those of the East, is the awakening of the widest masses of the people, their active struggle under the leadership of the working class, under the banner of Leninism, for democracy, peace and socialism. The bandit aggression of American imperialism against Korea and the provocative colonial policy of the British imperialists in the Near East have stimulated to fresh vigour the anti-imperialist feelings of hundreds of millions of people in Asia. This creates conditions for the formation of an extremely broad anti-imperialist front, embracing, as the programme of the Communist Party of India puts it, 'millions of toilers, the working class, the peasantry, the working intelligentsia, the middle classes, and equally also the national bourgeoisie which is interested in the freedom of the country and the building of a prosperous life'. The experience of the national liberation movement shows that the creation of a united anti-imperialist front is of first-rate importance for a successful struggle for independence in colonial countries. This front is the stronger the more decisively the peasantry, which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population in colonial countries, is drawn into the anti-imperialist struggle. The policy of the agrarian question, the struggle against feudalism and feudal survivals, these form the most important content of the national-liberation movement in colonial and semi-colonial countries. Quoting a number of V. I. Lenin's statements



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on the tasks of the revolutionary movement in backward countries, E. M. Zhukov declared that the struggle against mediæval survivals was and continues to be the chief task of the proletariat and the Communist Parties in countries subject to imperialism.

Dealing with the question of the possibility of a bloc and even an alliance with the national bourgeoisie in colonial and dependent countries, the rapporteur carefully examined the concept of the national bourgeoisie, excluding from it the compradore bourgeoisie as being closely linked with imperialism, and dividing the national bourgeoisie into the big and the middle bourgeoisie. The former are closely linked with the landlords, are disposed to come to terms with the imperialists and are only temporary and unreliable participants in the united front.

The unprecedented broadening of the anti-imperialist front in the countries of Asia gives particular weight to the question of enhancing the leading role of the working class (the vanguard of the national-colonial revolution), the strengthening of its alliance with the peasantry. The alliance of the working class with the peasantry is the basis of the anti-imperialist front in the countries of the East. The progress of the people's democratic countries of Asia, the general upsurge of the national-liberation movement in the East, testifies to the strengthening of the role of the proletariat in a number of countries of the non-Soviet East. Communist and Workers' parties (or parties of Labour) are already the acknowledged leaders of millions of toilers. But the demands placed upon the proletarian leadership ceaselessly increase both in the countries of people's democracy and in the colonies and semi-colonies of the East.

The broadest masses of the peoples of the non-Soviet East, whose feet are already on the path of People's Democracy and who are carrying forward the struggle for People's Democracy, for national liberation and for peace cherish feelings of the greatest trust and love for the Soviet Union and Comrade Stalin.

In the debate on E. M. Zhukov's report sixteen persons took part: corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik S.S.R., I. S. Braginsky, Doctor of Sciences A. M. Dyakov and G. N. Voitinsky, candidates of sciences I. Ya. Zlatkin, V. N. Nikiforov, A. N. Vzyanov, A. I. Stadnichenko, P. P. Staritsina, L. A. Sikiryanskaya, G. B. Ehrenburg, V. V. Balabushevich, G. V. Astafyev, A. N. Heifetz, Colonel A. A. Martynov, aspirant of the Academy of Social Sciences under the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. (B) Yu. P. Nasenko and scientific worker in the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. G. I. Levinson.



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Those who spoke took up a number of problems which related not only to the definition of the character and peculiarities of People's Democracy in the East but also to the history of its origin and development and to the prospect of the growing-over of the people's democratic revolution into the socialist revolution.

The chief problems which were examined were: —

(i) The common features of the regime of People's Democracy in the West and in the East and its special features in the countries of the East;

(ii) The special features of the regime of People's Democracy in those countries where there is not (or was not at the time of the establishment of the people's government) any proletariat;

(iii) The period in which people's democratic forms of government arise;

(iv) The significance of the experience of the Chinese Revolution and the ways of applying it in the revolutionary movement of the other countries of the East;

(v) The question of the non-capitalist path of development in its application to China and to India;

(vi) The question of the growing-over of the people's democratic revolution into the socialist revolution.

**1. Features in common between People's Democracy in the West and in the East and its peculiarities in the East.**

The majority of those who spoke, concurring with the fundamental propositions of the report on the peculiarities of People's Democracy in the East, considered it necessary to emphasise those fundamental features which are common to all countries of People's Democracy both East and West. They pointed out that both in the West and in the East, the People's Democratic regime, (*a*) arose in definite historical conditions, characterised by the strengthening of the Soviet country, the building of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the victory of the Soviet people over fascist Germany and imperialist Japan, i.e., in circumstances of the further strengthening of the Soviet Union and weakening of the world camp of imperialism (Martynov, Heifetz, Sikiryanskaya); (*b*) is a transitional regime and has to undertake the task of development towards socialism (Dyakov, Nikiforov, Martynov); and (*c*) carries out in its first phase tasks of an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character and relies upon a broad anti-imperialist and anti-feudal front (Nikiforov).

A. N. Heifetz, dealing with the fact that a People's Democratic regime can carry out the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, declared that this is equally valid for the East and the West. Although in the countries of the East People's Democracy is at present carrying out the functions of the revolutionary-democratic



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dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, with which it began in Europe, in the future on the basis of successes achieved, it can carry out the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

L. A. Sikiryanskaya spoke on the question of the stages of development of People's Democracy, declaring that unavoidable stages in the development of all countries of People's Democracy are (1) a stage of agrarian, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution, when general-national and general-democratic tasks are disposed of, and (2) a socialist stage.

The question of the stages of development of People's Democracy was dealt with also in the contribution of A. A. Martynov, who mentioned as a peculiarity of People's Democracy in the countries of the East that, whereas the fulfilment of the tasks of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution in the capitalist countries of Europe required a comparatively short period of time only, in the countries of People's Democracy in the East these tasks will require a notably longer period of time, for here the size of the tasks which have to be undertaken is notably greater.

Dealing with the peculiarities of People's Democracy in the countries of the East, the majority of speakers mentioned that these peculiarities consist in the fulfilment of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal tasks, tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and that the content of the people's democratic regime in the countries of the East is a special form of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

Taking the example of China, L. A. Sikiryanskaya showed the difference between the dictatorship in the countries of the East in present-day conditions and the dictatorship which was envisaged at the time of the Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905-07. Quoting the definition of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry given by J. V. Stalin in his article 'On the question of the workers' and peasants' government'*, Sikiryanskaya enumerated in detail the peculiarities of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry in China, seeing them as characteristic also for other colonial and semi-colonial countries in which the people's democratic revolution will win victory. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry in the East bears an anti-imperialist character; it is led by the Communist Party; its state form is People's Democracy; the proletariat shares power with the peasantry and also draws into

* Collected Works, Vol. IX, p. 186.



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the government a part of the national bourgeoisie. The fact that the party of the proletariat is the leading force of people's democracy in China already creates in germ an element of the future dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., of the State leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat. And this is a very substantial peculiarity of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry in China. Another peculiarity of people's democracy in China is that there are already at the present time germs of a non-capitalist, i.e., socialist development on a state-wide scale.

A. N. Heifetz also dwelt on this question, pointing out that it is necessary to observe that China has already left the system of world capitalism not only politically but also economically, and that the proletariat holds the leading position and is a predominant force in comparison with the bourgeois elements, which are weak politically and are compelled to recognise the leadership of the Communist Party, embodying the recognition in their programme (e.g., the Democratic League).

G. F. Astafyev directed his attention to the peculiarities of the bloc with the national bourgeoisie in the conditions of present-day China. He said that in present-day conditions the bloc with the national bourgeoisie in China has a number of peculiarities: (i) the subordination of the bourgeoisie to the political leadership of the proletariat and its party; (ii) the state regulation of the economic activity of the bourgeoisie in the interests of the people and the people's-democratic economy; (iii) a wide struggle by the Communist Party to liberate the masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie. These peculiarities are the special form of expression of the leading role of the working class in the united front and the transitional character of the people's-democratic regime in China.

*To be continued.*

## Book Reviews

### STUDYING MARXISM

*Introduction to Marxism*, by Emile Burns (64 pp. *2s. 6d.*). *Readers' Guide to the Marxist Classics*, Ed. by Maurice Cornforth (116 pp. *2s. 6d.*). Both Lawrence and Wishart.

EMILE BURNS' *Introduction to Marxism* is a new and revised edition of his *What is Marxism?* that went through six editions and provided the first way in to the study of scientific socialism for very many workers. Emile Burns has the great gift of explaining political economy and philosophical theories in a way that makes them easy to grasp and which does not in any way overemphasise and falsify them. In this short book he treats the laws of social development, capitalist society, the imperialist stage of capitalism, class struggles and the state, socialist society and the Marxist view of nature. This is the best short intro-



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duction in English to the study of Marxism-Leninism.

But when the student of Marxism continues his studies the problem always arises of how best to carry this out. In what order is it most useful to tackle the classics of scientific socialism? Where was reference made to this or that particular problem in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Stalin? What ground is covered in this or that work—say for instance *Anti-Duhring* by Engels, or in Lenin's *Two Tactics?*

It is here that the *Readers' Guide to the Marxist Classics* plays so valuable a role because in a relatively short space it provides answers to these questions. It makes suggestions for an 'order' in which to approach the study of Marxism, it summarises the contents of the main Marxist writings and provides an invaluable subject index. It also lists all the works that are available in English.

Both these books are really precious weapons for students and teachers of scientific socialism.

JAMES KLUGMANN

## CHINA TODAY

*China Today*, by Sundar Lal. (702 pp. Hindustani Cultural Society; Collet's, London, 15s.)

'SOMEBODY asked me whether God existed in China. I do not know. . . . But I know this, that there is more real human godliness there than anywhere else in the world. . . . We, in our non-violence, have forgotten Gandhi. The Chinese have somehow resurrected him . . . this is one of the miracles you have to go to China to see for yourselves!'

So wrote R. K. Karanjia, President of the India-China Friendship Association, Bombay. He was one of a party of thirteen led by Pandit Sundar Lal of the Hindustani Cultural Society which formed an Indian Goodwill Mission which visited China in September and October 1951. Pandit Sundar Lal has written an account of the mission and has included individual impressions from each member of his party. In the preface Sundar Lal says that it will be seen from these individual contributions that though their authors hold widely differing views on many things yet so far as the visit to China was concerned, 'on all broad questions our conclusions are unanimous.' This unanimity is one of warm appreciation and sympathy and can only be explained by the overwhelming effect which the revolution ('re-birth' seems an inappropriate term) of the Chinese people has on all who are privileged to visit their country.

An experience similar to that of the Indian Goodwill Mission befell a party of 31 persons from Britain, of which I had the privilege to be the leader, which visited China a year after the Indian mission. This party was representative of political, scientific, academic, trade union and general cultural circles in Britain and went to China under the auspices of the Britain China Friendship Association. The general reaction of the British party was similar to that of the Indian mission, and was expressed by Professor Ben Farrington, one of the party, when, writing in the October issue of this journal, he said:

> It is hard to find words to describe the moral atmosphere of the New China. It is as if some vision of Shelleys had come true and selfishness had been banished from the world.

It is this enchanted atmosphere which pervades Sundar Lal's book. His is a very simple yet detailed account of the day to day experiences of his party, an unfolding panorama of New China, recording the impact on his mission of the enthusiasm, the happi-



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ness and well-being of the Chinese people and their miracles of achievement after only two years (in 1951) of revolutionary development.

His party saw, as ours did, the enthusiasm of the peasants in villages in different parts of China, free men whose liberation has resulted in such an increase in food production as has enabled the People's Government to abolish famine and to export rice to India and Ceylon; the great health movement by which the menace of epidemic disease has been largely overcome and its astonishing parallel achievement, the almost complete elimination of flies from the great cities and even from the villages; the movement to overcome illiteracy, the great urge to industrial development with its accompanying upsurge of virile trade unionism; the rebirth of Chinese culture rooted in the people and so much else that Sundar Lal confesses that his book, which runs to 700 pages, hardly serves as an introduction to the miracle of New China.

Sundar Lal and his colleagues frequently make comparisons between India and New China, e.g., Mohammad Habib, Professor of History and Politics, Aligarh Muslim University, writes:—

> My opposite number, the Professor of Social Services at Nanfang University at Canton . . . shook me warmly by the hand and said 'China has been liberated. India will also be liberated'. It is the greatest goodwill message I have got for my country during four weeks' residence in that land.
>
> But what is the significance of the concept 'Liberation' of which the Chinese are so fond? It means, firstly, liberation from the yoke of foreign powers; secondly liberation from the country's own governing classes; and thirdly, liberation from all reactionary ideas, from all cultures of 'slave ideology'.
>
> . . . The fact that India has become an independent country should not blind us to the fact that the Indian cultural and moral revolution has yet to begin.

Another distinguished member of the mission, Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, Director of the Delhi School of Economics and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Delhi University and an ardent supporter of Nehru, shows an objectivity in looking at the Chinese scene which is so markedly absent from almost all western comment on China today:

> The Chinese Communist Party, although its membership is not large has won the complete confidence of the people. The hold of the Communist Party is based on the same sort of consideration which gave Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues leadership of the Indian masses. The key to the success of the Chinese Government lies in mobilising the willing co-operation of vast masses of people behind its policies, through day to day discussion with the common people of the burning problems of the day. It is mainly because of this that the government is able to run the multi-party state effectively.

Sundar Lal's book is a valuable introduction to New China. He himself writes in a very simple style, and all his party record faithfully and sympathetically what they saw and heard. Sometimes the views of one or another will appear rather naive, but the general result is a composium which reflects the triumphant upsurge of the Chinese people through their great liberation movement.

W. J. ELLERBY

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indeed, that we have our round-the-world hook-up—people to people. Fresh in mind too, is one Canadian reader, an indefatigable enthusiast for this Magazine of International Labour. In letters he sent for me to enclose to friends with a specimen copy, he wrote: *'Labour Monthly* will stand for all time as an authoritative contemporary record in the history of our civilisation'. That is indeed something to live up to in 1953.

To turn homeward. Our New Year message to all at home who, like our Canadian friend, are tireless in winning new readers, finding means of sharing their copy as the financial pinch grips them, on whose steady support we rely with confidence. Greetings to, and from, a few of those friends: *The Northumbrian:* 'I've been a reader for many, many years. For political guidance and in the struggle for peace *L.M.* is most essential.' *The Yorkshireman:* 'A classic in socialist literature'. *The Scotsman and his friends:* 'Our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the great service and inspiration provided'. *The Welshman:* 'It's the last journal I'd give up—far superior to anything else'. *The Irishman:* 'Have to budget each month closely, but here's a small donation, regular from now on'. *The Londoner:* 'You are doing a vitally important job, and in my opinion doing it in a fashion which it would be hard to better'. *The Lancastrian:* 'One day I'll call and thank you all in person for the best guide to affairs in print today'. And greetings to all who work to speed the future.

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